

TOPIC 1: yourCHOICE It's Up to You!

Skill-Based Outcomes

Preteens who participate in this activity will be able to:

- ❖ Identify the values that affect their food and lifestyle choices.
- ❖ Practice goal-setting steps to manage eating and lifestyle decisions.
- ❖ Respect the different goals and choices others set for themselves.
- ❖ Prepare a simple, tasty snack.

In the following nine sequential sessions, preteens will use skill-based outcomes to:

1. Set specific goals for healthful living.
2. Plan changes in their eating and physical activity patterns to promote growth and overall health.

Empowerment Messages

- ❖ Life is full of choices, including choices about food and physical activity. The quality of your life depends on decisions that affect your body, mind, and inner self.
- ❖ The right choice for you depends on your values, needs, and goals. It's important to respect the different choices people make.
- ❖ Decision-making and goal-setting skills help you manage your life and your future.

Activity Summary

(Icebreaker) **Mirror Image** - Preteens pair up and mirror one another's movements. They see that it's hard to follow goals that aren't their own.

- 1 Values Charades** - They act out what's important to them, then discuss how their values guide their actions and goals.
- 2 "Roll" Play** - With a ball-rolling activity, they explore the power that their choices have in directing what happens in their lives.
- 3 More "Roll" Play** - Preteens learn and practice goal-setting steps with one or two typical situations that many preteens face. Use the rolling ball to help them take turns with group discussion.
- 4 (Afterschool Snack) Peanut Butter 'N Fruit-Wich** - They make a sandwich snack, as they explore why it's a good snack choice.

(Wrap up) **What's yourCHOICE?** - Each person comes up with personal steps to make goal-setting steps part of his or her life.

Getting Ready

● Read:

- ❖ Do You Know...? on the next page

● Display Posters:

- ❖ *Feed Me!*
- ❖ *Move It!*
- ❖ *FIGHT BAC!*

● Get:

For "Mirror Image"

- ❖ (Optional) tape recorder and audiotape *or* CD player and CD with upbeat music

For "'Roll' Play and More 'Roll' Play"

- ❖ Ball

For "Peanut Butter 'N Fruit-Wich" (snack activity)*

- ❖ Ingredients: whole-grain bread, peanut butter, apples, bananas, carrots
- ❖ Equipment: cutting board, knives, grater, paper plates with utensils to serve
- ❖ Table setting: paper plates, knives, napkins

* If your program has been approved to serve USDA's Afterschool Snacks, the snack served as part of this activity may qualify for reimbursement. For each participant, **serve at least 1 slice of bread and 2 tablespoons of peanut butter.** Suggest serving with lowfat milk.

For "Wrapping Up: What's yourCHOICE?"

- ❖ "yourCHOICE" handout and folder** for each participant
- ❖ pens or pencils
- ❖ (Optional) some form of recognition for each participant

** Plan to keep the handouts in folders at your center so preteens can use them at each session.

Do You Know...?

In a society with so many choices and a bewildering array of options, it's important to learn about healthful eating and active living in several ways:

- ❖ **Learn** facts about food, nutrition, and physical activity.
- ❖ **Explore** ways to eat healthfully and move more.
- ❖ **Discover** what's personally important. Exploring your own values helps you apply what you learn to everyday choices and turn them into healthful living habits.

How can a values approach help preteens learn to make healthful eating and lifestyle choices? From the start, activities in *The Power of Choice* help preteens explore their values. They think about what's important in their lives and how these values guide what they do. That includes decisions about eating and active living. They'll learn to weigh the pros, cons, and outcomes of their options and to match what they do with what's important to them.

Exploring values is personal. These learning activities don't suggest right or wrong. Instead, they help preteens work through a *process* of doing what's right for them: knowing what's important, making choices (based on what they know and care about), and doing it! Knowing their own priorities helps preteens make food and lifestyle choices that help them be the best they can be.

Why address decision-making? Preteens face many decision-making situations each day. Some are part of the day's routine: for example, what to eat or wear, what to do after school, when to do homework. Other decisions may not seem so simple: what classes to take, who they want as a friend, whether or not to join a sports team or club, how to spend their money. Many decisions affect the direction of their lives. Values and goals, friends, family, money, time, feelings of self-worth, and health affect their choices.

As preteens get to know the process of decision-making and goal-setting, explore these questions together:

- ❖ With so many options, how do you make choices?
- ❖ How do you think your personal choices/decisions affect you now and in the future?
- ❖ What choices (food, everyday activities, etc.) affect your health?
- ❖ How do you avoid temptation?
- ❖ Why do people make different decisions? Is that okay?
- ❖ How do your values, surroundings, resources, goals, family, peers, etc., fit in?
- ❖ How can you respect the many different choices that your peers, family members, and others make?
- ❖ How can you make decisions that help you reach your goals?

Tips for Leaders:

Preteens might talk about appearance and body weight issues, as they explore what they think is important. Be careful about this. Growing preteens should not be preoccupied with weight. Weight loss is not recommended unless guided by a health care provider. Use the information on the Height Chart and the Body Mass Index (BMI) from the Team Nutrition website to help them understand more about their body size and to track how they are growing. Have them talk with their family and a doctor about their growth pattern. Help them seek advice from someone they can trust to give good advice. (See Team Nutrition web pages for guidance on adolescent weight and the BMI: pages 2 to 5 at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Educators/index.htm> and for preteens see: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Educators/Student/index.htm>).

How can preteens put goal-setting steps in action? Using the case study on the following page, you'll see how goal-setting steps work. Enjoy reading Derek's case, and refer to his scenario as an example for the upcoming activities. Also, check out the Team Nutrition yourSELF website for students: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Students/index.htm>.

Tips for Leaders:

Refer to the Computer Disk for more about...

- ❖ *Young Adolescents: Healthier Lifestyles*
- ❖ *Goal-setting steps*
- ❖ *Decision-making steps*

Goal-setting steps

NAME: Derek, alias Mouse Potato

AFTERSCHOOL ACTIVITY: Surfing the 'net

HIS STORY:

Unknowingly Derek linked to a nutrition website (<http://www.kidnetic.com>) and discovered that his meals and snacks are coming up short on fruits and vegetables. As he surfs the 'net, he mindlessly nibbles away until dinner, but fruits or vegetables rarely cross his lips. He also realized his in-line skates (that he saved 6 months to buy) are somewhere under his bed.

1 SET A REALISTIC GOAL.

Derek has two goals:

(1) Eat at least two servings of fruits and three servings of vegetables each day. (2) Spend plenty of time away from the computer being active at least 60 minutes each day.

MAKE A PLAN.

2 Derek's steps:

(1) Ask his family to have fruits and vegetables in the kitchen for snacks. (2) Have fruit juice at breakfast. (3) Eat a salad with dinner. (4) Make a point of using his in-line skates at least three times a week for at least 30 minutes each time. Added bonus: he hopes his plan will get him a new nickname!

3 PREPARE FOR CHALLENGES.

Derek doesn't want to spend time making afterschool snacks.

So, he decided to make a list of quick-to-fix snacks. The kitchen is loaded with all kinds of foods. For starters, he prepares a bowl of cereal with sliced fruit, pours a glass of milk, and cleans up. It takes him only 2 minutes 15 seconds.

4 ASK FOR HELP.

Derek searched the Web for a snack site and downloaded a bunch of easy ideas.

He even participated in a snack chat with other hungry preteens. His parents were happy when he contributed his ideas to the family grocery list. His best friend found his skates, too, and joined him.

5 GIVE YOURSELF A BREAK.

It's okay for Derek to come up short on fruits and vegetables every so often.

He knows that it's what he eats over a few days that counts.

6 PAT YOURSELF ON THE BACK.

Derek feels good about eating more fruits and vegetables; he's up to a combined five a day. For exercise, skating is great, especially with his friend. And his new nickname: "Skatestar."

yourCHOICE It's Up to You!

Topic 1 Activities

Getting Started: Mirror Image

*Start with an icebreaker that lets preteens know that **The Power of Choice** gets them involved. Turn on some music to add fun to the activity.*

To introduce the topic:

- ❖ **Have preteens stand face to face with a partner.** The one with the closest birthday is the leader.
- ❖ **Have them raise their hands** with palms out and several inches apart.
- ❖ **When you say “yourCHOICE,” leaders will move their hands and stretch their arms; others will follow as a mirror image.** Continue for about 1 minute. If some move faster than their partner, that’s okay – it’s part of the activity.
- ❖ **Now have them reverse their roles** and repeat the activity.

Talk about the experience as you introduce goal-setting. Keep the discussion open-ended. That helps preteens talk freely, and everyone gets a chance to share his or her thoughts. **ASK:**

- ❖ How does it feel to lead? To follow?
- ❖ Can you follow your partner? Why or why not?
- ❖ What did the activity show about making your own choices and setting goals?
- ❖ What happens when someone makes choices for you? Who is the best person to set goals and make choices for you? Why?
- ❖ Do you feel different about choices you make for yourself? How?
- ❖ What about goals you set for yourself? Do you try harder?

POINT OUT: The goals you set for yourself and what you do depend on your values. A value is personal; it’s a belief you care about a lot.

Activity 1: Values Charades

Play “charades” to help preteens share what is important to them—their personal values. (Optional: Keep the tape recorder or CD player on; perhaps change the music.)

Start by explaining the game of charades: A guessing game where each person acts out something without talking. Others try to guess what he or she is trying to express, such as reading or studying or playing a sport.

- ❖ **In small groups, have each person act out a personal value** or something he or she cares about.
- ❖ **Talk about each charade:**
 - From the charade, what do you think is important to *(person’s name)*?
 - Why is it important? How is it important? How might that value affect what you do? How can it affect your food choices? Your free time?

Help them reflect on their own values. As you talk together, share your own values, too. **ASK:**

- ❖ What (from your charade or not) do you care about? Why?
- ❖ Do you think your values match what you do? What you eat? How you spend your free time?
- ❖ Why or why not?
- ❖ What isn’t important to you? Why?
- ❖ What if a friend or someone in your family has different values than you do? What can you do? **POINT OUT:** It’s important to respect the different priorities and personal decisions people make. You can respect their choices without giving up what’s important to you.

Sum up their priorities that relate to health: for example, having energy, feeling good, feeling good about myself, looking good, having friends. Share your priorities, too. **ASK:** Why is it smart to take care of your body?

POINT OUT: Your body has something very special inside—YOU!

Activity 2: “Roll” Play

Use a ball-rolling demonstration to explore how changes and choices can affect the lives of preteens.

Start by asking:

- ❖ What’s changing in your life? Encourage any answer.
- ❖ What changes can you control?
- ❖ What changes can’t you control?
- ❖ **POINT OUT:** Your genes control the way your body grows; you control your chance to be your personal best.

Roll a ball three times without interfering with its direction. **ASK:**

- ❖ Is that where you want the ball to go?
- ❖ Can you change the direction of the ball without touching it?

Put the ball in front of the group without touching or moving it. **ASK:**

- ❖ Can you get the ball moving without touching it?

Roll the ball again. Have someone decide where he or she wants it to go, then kick it gently in that direction while it’s rolling.

ASK: How does this demonstration apply to your life? To changes you might make? **POINT OUT:**

- ❖ Many things in life move along no matter what, but perhaps not in the direction you’d like.
- ❖ Other things may stay the same if you don’t do anything about them.
- ❖ You can take charge of many changes in your life if you know what you want. Set goals and take action to reach your goals.

Activity 3: More “Roll” Play

Have preteens practice goal-setting steps by thinking through a scenario as a group. As they do so, they'll think of ways to eat and move more. Accept any answer.

(Tip: Do this activity again later as preteens learn more about eating and active living. They'll come up with more options, and judge their choices better.)

Name: Derek, alias Mouse Potato

Afterschool activity: Surfing the ‘net

His story: Unknowingly Derek linked to a nutrition website and discovered that his meals and snacks are coming up short on fruits and vegetables. As he surfs the ‘net, he mindlessly nibbles away until dinner, but fruits or vegetables rarely cross his lips. He also realized his in-line skates (that he saved a long time to buy) are somewhere under his bed.

Sit in a circle on the floor. To give preteens a turn to talk, roll the ball to each person. Remember, preteens have the right to pass and roll the ball to someone else.

Roll the ball to someone to read the scenario aloud. Explain:

- ❖ Derek has goals to work toward. As a group, help him use goal-setting steps to get there.
- ❖ Preteens first need to help Derek: *(1) set a goal.* **Have preteens roll the ball** to three people. Each will be asked to come up with an appropriate goal. As a group, choose one to focus on.

Continue to roll the ball to give preteens a turn to offer ideas for the next five goal-setting steps for the scenario. “Do You Know...?” on page 5 shows the steps and the types of answers they might give.

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|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <i>(2) Make a plan.</i> | <i>(5) Give yourself a break.</i> |
| <i>(3) Prepare for challenges.</i> | <i>(6) Pat yourself on the back.</i> |
| <i>(4) Ask for help.</i> | |

ASK: What might happen if Derek just lets things happen with no goal-setting steps? How might that affect his chance of doing what is important to him?

(Option: If you have enough time, do Janine’s scenario found at the Team Nutrition yourSELF website for students: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Students/index.htm>, so preteens have more practice with goal-setting. Or they can break into small groups to come up with and work through their own case studies.)

Activity 4: Peanut Butter 'N Fruit-Wich

Tie this afterschool snack into the scenarios that your group just discussed in Activity 3.

Prepare the snack together:

- ❖ **Give volunteer preteens a chance to wash their hands before handling food.** Talk about and practice this food safety tip. Refer to the messages on the *FIGHT BAC!* poster.

Food Safety-Smarts: Always wash your hands thoroughly in warm, soapy water before you make or eat a snack or meal—especially after using the bathroom or touching other things. Wash for 20 seconds to most effectively get rid of the bacteria on your skin.

- ❖ **Guide preteens in getting the snack ready:** Get out peanut butter and bread; slice bananas and apples (rinsed); peel and shred carrots; serve ingredients on paper plates with utensils; set paper plates, knives, and napkins on the table.
- ❖ **Have everyone put together his or her own Peanut Butter 'N Fruit-Wich as a snack.** Preteens can make their peanut butter sandwich with apple, banana, or carrot—or all three.

As they eat, have them think about Derek. Use the *Feed Me!* poster to talk about their sandwiches. Discuss:

- ❖ Why might the Peanut Butter 'N Fruit-Wich be a smart snack choice for Derek? How about you?
- ❖ What else can you put on this sandwich to meet your goals for eating? What other breads can you use?
- ❖ How can you make this snack at home?
- ❖ What might you do differently? Why?

Wrapping Up: What's yourCHOICE?

Wrap up by having each person think about his or her personal goals.

Review what they learned about this topic. **ASK:**

- ❖ What are the reasons for using goal-setting steps to make choices?
- ❖ How can you set goals and take steps to reach them?

Pass out the "yourCHOICE" handout to each preteen. Explain:

- ❖ During the next sessions, you'll write nine personal eating and lifestyle goals on this paper. Under the columns, "more," "less," "enough," you'll write three simple action steps you can take to reach your goals.
- ❖ Each week you'll also talk about the action steps you took.
(Optional) Give some form of recognition to each person who takes at least one step to manage his or her own health and future!

On their "yourCHOICE" handout, have preteens:

- ❖ **Write five things they value** (things that are important to them) on the backside.
- ❖ **Write one health-related goal that reflects their values** on the chart on the front of the handout.
- ❖ **Write three action steps** he or she can take this week to reach that goal.
(Note: At the next session, ask them what actions they actually took.)
Tip: As a leader, share your own goal and action steps, too. *Remind them:* there's "power in your choices!"
- ❖ **Write their names on the sheet.**

Collect the handouts to use in the upcoming sessions.

My goals...	More: I can...	Enough: I can...	Less: I can...	
To make smarter food and activity choices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	"yourCHOICE" Your name _____
To move more and sit less	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
To pay attention to how much I eat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
To use food labels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
To choose foods with less fat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
To make smarter drink choices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
To make smarter snack choices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
To make smarter fast-food choices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
To avoid the urge to eat too much	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
To try new foods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

